

## **Pakistan**

### **Facts and Statistics**

**Location:** Southern Asia, bordering Afghanistan 2,430 km, China 523 km, India 2,912 km, Iran 909 km

**Capital:** Islamabad

**Population:** 159,196,336 (July 2004 est.)

**Ethnic Make-up:** Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun (Pathan), Baloch, Muhajir (immigrants from India at the time of partition and their descendants)

**Religions:** Muslim 97% (Sunni 77%, Shi'a 20%), Christian, Hindu, and other (inc. Sikh) 3%

### **Language in Pakistan**

Urdu is the only official language of Pakistan. Although English is generally used instead of Urdu in this regard. English is the lingua franca of the Pakistani elite and most of the government ministries.

Urdu is closely related to Hindi but is written in an extended Arabic alphabet rather than in Devanagari. Urdu also has more loans from Arabic and Persian than Hindi has.

Many other languages are spoken in Pakistan, including Punjabi, Siraiki, Sindhi, Pashtu, Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, Burushaski, Balti, Khawar, Gujrati and other languages with smaller numbers of speakers.

### **Pakistani Society & Culture**

#### **Islam**

- . Islam is practiced by the majority of Pakistanis and governs their personal, political, economic and legal lives.
- . Among certain obligations for Muslims are to pray five times a day - at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening.
- . Friday is the Muslim holy day. Everything is closed.
- . During the holy month of Ramadan all Muslims must fast from dawn to dusk and are only permitted to work six hours per day. Fasting includes no eating, drinking, cigarette smoking, or gum chewing.

#### **The Family**

- . The extended family is the basis of the social structure and individual identity.
- . It includes the nuclear family, immediate relatives, distant relatives, tribe members, friends, and neighbours.
- . Loyalty to the family comes before other social relationships, even business.
- . Nepotism is viewed positively, since it guarantees hiring people who can be trusted, which is crucial in a country where working with people one knows and trusts is of primary importance.
- . The family is more private than in many other cultures.
- . Female relatives are protected from outside influences. It is considered inappropriate to ask questions about a Pakistani's wife or other female relatives.
- . Families are quite large by western standards, often having up to 6 children.

#### **Hierarchical Society**

- . Pakistan is a hierarchical society.
- . People are respected because of their age and position.
- . Older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. In a social situation, they are served first and

their drinks may be poured for them. Elders are introduced first, are provided with the choicest cuts of meat, and in general are treated much like royalty.

- . Pakistanis expect the most senior person, by age or position, to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.

- . Titles are very important and denote respect. It is expected that you will use a person's title and their surname until invited to use their first name.